

PLAIN TALKS

June
1981



MAIL BOX

THE COVER

Pete and Betty Carney are healthier and happier — as well as tanned — after almost a year of life on their sailboat, *The Brendan*.

Carney retired June 1, 1980, from his position as transportation superintendent. He began work for GSU in 1957 as chief pilot.

The Beaumont couple was caught by the camera of visiting friends — Mr. and Mrs. Russ Hawkins — during a visit to the Bahama Islands.

A related story and pictures can be found on pages 12 and 13.

R. C. LeJeune Jr.
Gulf States Utilities
Baton Rouge, La.
Dear Mr. LeJeune,

I hope you will accept my sincere thanks for your assistance with my gas bill. It is gratifying to find a man in your position with such kind regard for the consumers. As a relatively new GSU customer, I am inspired by the very personal interest you have shown.

I cannot thank you enough for your understanding of my situation and your kind assistance.

Dana R. Wynns
Baton Rouge, La.

Editor's Note: LeJeune is a consumer services representative-senior for the Baton Rouge Division.

W. Donham Crawford
Gulf States Utilities Co.
Beaumont, Texas
Dear Sir,

I attend Fehl Elementary School and I'm presently in the fifth grade. I have read your Third Annual Report for Young People. I really enjoyed the book and would recommend it to other boys and girls. It helped me understand more about your company and how you can take one small idea and make large factories.

The part of the story concerning Nelson Creative, and how he was inspired to put steam to work — not only was this portion of the story enlightening it was also encouraging.

Thank you for the magazine.
Yours truly,
Deshjuana Jones
Beaumont, Texas

Bert Rogers
Gulf States Utilities
Beaumont, Texas
Dear Mr. Rogers:

I want to thank you for arranging such an interesting and informative tour of your organization for the students in my secretarial office procedures class. I know from the comments I received from them later that they enjoyed it a great deal.

Also, I would like to express my thanks to Carolyn Theobald for her help. Our guides were all very patient in answering the many questions that the students had about the fascinating equipment that is used by the employees in your company.

I know that my students benefited from our visit to Gulf States Utilities, and I hope that my classes will be welcome in the future. Thanks again, Mr. Rogers, for making us feel so welcome.
Sincerely,

Nancy Darsey
Lamar University

PLAIN TALKS

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Employees who change residences or offices should fill out company mailing-address-change forms (GSU0012-00-79) and return them to the mailroom in the Wilson Building. GSU publications, departmental mailings and other company information are not automatically forwarded; addresses must be corrected when employees move.

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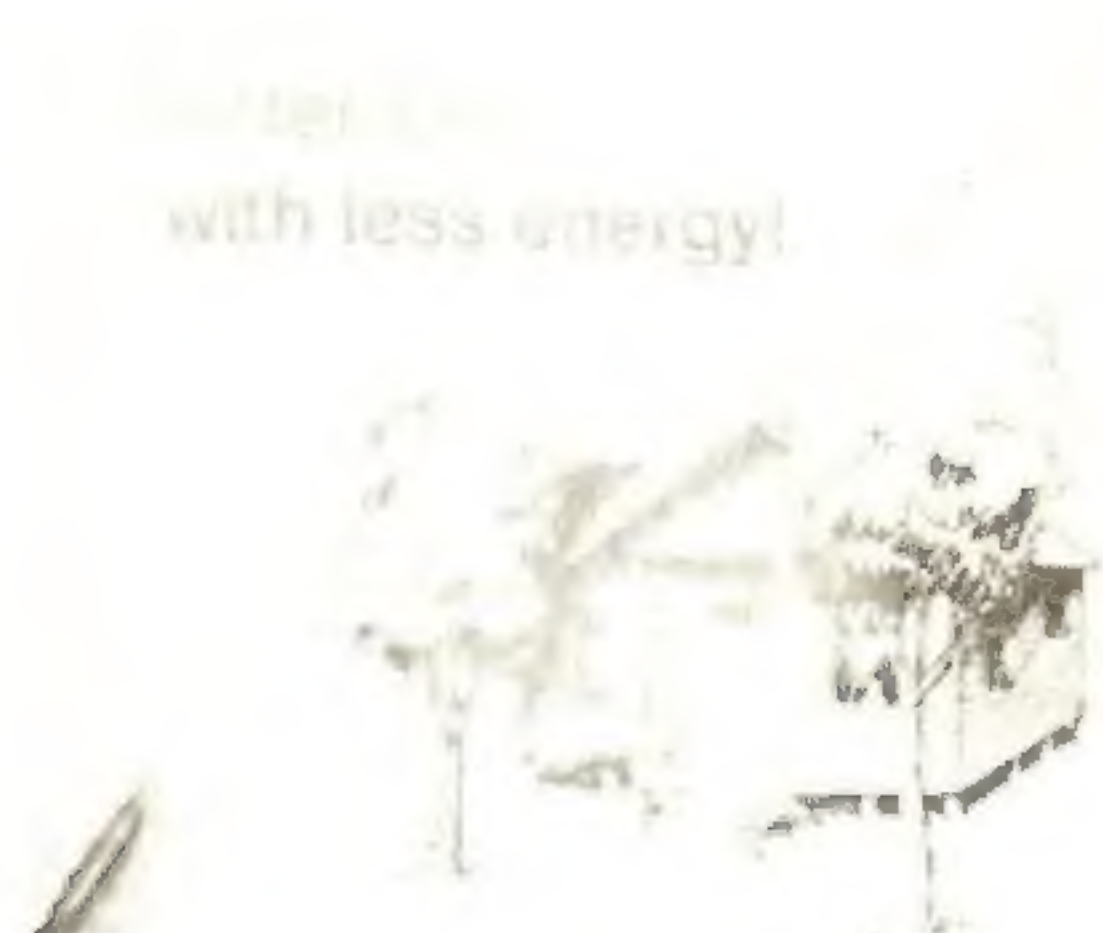
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NEWS BRIEFS

State agency cites Dowies for guide

Thelma Lou Dowies has been awarded an Energy and Education Citation from the Texas Education Agency for writing a teachers' guide that was used with "Bulbs for Growth," GSU's "First Annual Report for Young People." She wrote the first teachers' guide in 1978 and also has written one for the third annual young people's report recently distributed in schools.

Dowies teaches gifted fifth-grade students at Jones Elementary School in West Orange-Cove ISD. She said her original purpose in writing the teachers' guide was to make economics as well as energy topics appealing to students. "Even though the guide is on economics, it is about an energy company," Dowies said.

"In elementary school, not much is done in economics. It (producing the guide) was a chance to show what is involved in running a company. I just touched the high points, so they could get an idea of the total picture."

Dowies was selected for the award because of her "contributions in the field of energy and the environment." She is married to GSU employee Jim Dowies, supervisor of payment processing in the Beaumont Division. Copies of Dowies' teachers' guide for the 1980 report for young people may be obtained by contacting Rick Harvin, extension 191, Goodhue Building, Beaumont, or by calling the Consumer Services Department in each division.

Installations made at River Bend

Four 400 MVA transformers installed in the River Bend Substation near St. Francisville this spring made up the largest transformer bank in the GSU system, reports Floyd Doughty of the Baton Rouge Substation Department.

According to Doughty, the transformer bank was installed under the supervision of substation foremen Fabien Daigle and Carrol Wilson. The scene in the accompanying photograph shows one of the units being erected on its "rockers" to the vertical position.

Doughty says the large size of the units made it necessary to ship them in the horizontal position, then erect them on foundations prior to assembly.



The purpose of the bank is to provide an additional means of connecting GSU's 230 KV system to the 500 KV system. According to Doughty, "This will help relieve the existing 667 MVA transformer at Willow Glen, which is sometimes overloaded. It will also provide the means to utilize our 500 KV system more effectively, both intra-system ties and ties with other utilities, including the new Big Cajun No. 2 coal-fired unit near New Roads, Louisiana."

As Doughty pointed out, in the future the bank will connect the River Bend nuclear unit into the 500 KV system.

High marks given to River Bend

GSU has corrected several weaknesses, most of them minor, which were identified during an intensive three-week inspection that resulted in the River Bend nuclear project receiving high marks for its management, procurement and quality assurance activities.

Six Nuclear Regulatory Commission inspectors spent 362 man-hours during January at the River Bend construction site near St. Francisville, and informed GSU that it identified 14 areas of "perceived programmatic strengths" and 17 areas of weakness.

The weaknesses generally involved paperwork and procedural problems which usually arise when a plant is being built on an ambitious schedule, while the project's overall management, procurement and quality assurance activities were recognized as strong.

Only one violation was found during the three week review and it was a Level VI, which is the least significant category of infractions. The violation stemmed from the fact that an engineering manual had not been kept up to date. GSU officials told the NRC that the incident "appears to be a one-time deficiency" but that steps had been taken to prevent a repeat.

Among the 14 strengths outlined by the NRC were:

— "In the area of Project Management, both the licensee (GSU) and the contractor (Stone and Webster) have experienced, highly motivated, quality conscious personnel in management and supervision."

— "The Nuclear Agreement seems to provide a responsible and reasonable labor relations/negotiation tool." This agreement, which involves the contractor and building trades unions, includes several innovative procedures in such areas as resolving labor disputes.

— "Top management of GSU and S&W hold regular meetings, with corporate quality assurance input for problem resolution."

NEWS BRIEFS

Magazine prints Newman article

An article entitled "A Utility's Progress in Switching 20/34.5-kV URD" has been published in the June 1981 edition of *Transmission and Distribution Magazine*.

Written by Gulf Stater H. W. "Mike" Newman, the article focused on innovations being used in a section of The Woodlands, a planned city being developed in the GSU service area about 20 miles north of Houston.

According to Newman's article, GSU makes extensive use of elbow connectors for terminating and switching.

Newman, who was recently named operating supervisor for the Western Division, was a division engineer when he submitted the article for publication. He has held positions with GSU in the Substation and Transmission Design departments as well.

Newman graduated from the University of Texas at Arlington in 1971 with a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering.

Investments given for Thrift Plan

Investments made by the Thrift Plan trustee during May, 1981, covering employee deductions and company contributions through April, 1981, included the purchase of 19,615 shares of common stock at a total cost of \$213,849.50. The average cost per share was \$10.9023.

The trustee also deposited \$152,781.72 in savings with First Security Bank of Beaumont.



Ramsey submits winning idea

Don Ramsey, Port Arthur meterman, recently received a \$100 cash award from Gulf States for his prize-winning suggestion made under the Employee Suggestion Program.

Ramsey is shown accepting his check from Delbert Zimmerly, Port Arthur operating superintendent.

Ramsey's suggestion was to begin billing customers who use electricity for railroad crossings and billboards on a flat rate basis, based upon previous consumption. According to Ramsey, meters previously located at such sites were frequently vandalized.

Earnings given for 1st quarter

GSU announced on April 27 that earnings per share of common stock were 26 cents for the quarter ended March 31, 1981, compared to 34 cents for the comparable three months in 1980.

The decrease in 1981 first quarter earnings compared to first quarter 1980 results primarily was due to a 1981 first quarter increase of \$6.1 million in unrecovered fuel costs.

Earnings per share for the 12 months ended March 31, 1981, were \$1.94. Earnings per share for the prior 12 months were \$1.81.

New rates apply for auto loans

New interest rates for automobile loans financed for Gulf States employees through Texas Commerce Bank-Beaumont went into effect June 1, according to Eleanor J. Triplett, GSU director-disbursement accounting.

Mrs. Triplett said the interest rate on all car and truck loans was raised from a maximum annual percentage rate of 12.91 percent to a maximum annual percentage rate of 15.55 percent. The interest rate on all other loans to Gulf Staters was raised from 13.8 percent per year to 16.43 percent per year.

According to Mrs. Triplett, the procedure for applying for an automobile loan is as follows:

- After selecting an item, obtain the item description and model, the amount of trade-in (if any) and the total cost to be financed.

- Complete a credit application form supplied by the dealer.

- Ask the dealer to call Texas Commerce Bank-Beaumont to submit the required information.

- Once a loan is approved by the bank, the bank will contact either the employee or the dealer, whichever the customer requests.

- After a loan is approved, complete payroll deduction forms available from the company loan representative.

Conservation Effort Aims

By Sharon Englade



Autry Thompkins shows some of the props she uses when making conservation presentations.

Gulf States customers in the low and fixed income groups in the Baton Rouge area are coming out the winners in the battle of the high utility bills because of an all-out effort by the Consumer Services Department to make energy conservation information and "know-how" available to them.

Last year, the department decided to make a concerted effort to reach those who, in all likelihood, would never set foot inside a GSU Energy Store — the primary vehicle for disseminating conservation information.

Because of her work in bridging the gap that often exists between the utility company and the low-income customer, Autry Thompkins, consumer services representative, was this year's recipient of the distinguished service award presented by the Baton Rouge Association for Community Action.

She was recognized for her work in bringing energy saving information, via special displays

and literature, right into the targeted low income areas, rather than attempting to bring the people to her. Her audio-visual and "low cost/no cost" demonstrations were given in the Community Action Centers and in food stamp offices throughout the area.

Bill Brooks of Beaumont, system supervisor of community and institutional programs, estimated Thompkins' how-to programs reached more than 4,200 people.

And moving from how-to to actual practice, Harriet Babin, supervisor of consumer services in the Baton Rouge Division, said that, ironically, while her department was talking with a manufacturer about obtaining insulation material to weatherize a yet-to-be selected home, the city of Baker came to GSU for help in a community project — making homes more energy-efficient.

As a result, one elderly woman living on a fixed income in an uninsulated home now has a house

that keeps the weather outside, and Gulf States and the Baker townspeople have a sense of pride in their accomplishment.

The Council on Aging selected the house and Bruce Nolen, supervisor of NEW audits, coordinated the project. GSU supplied the caulking and weatherstripping, Rockwool Industries donated the batts of insulation for installation under the floor and in the attic and the Baker Jaycees provided the manpower to weatherize the home.

After a year, the utility bills of the now-insulated home will be compared with those of the previous year to gauge the degree of conservation, Miss Babin said.

"We were trying to show what an individual can do by himself . . . but this went one step further" because of the community involvement, said Brooks.

Since consumer service auditors are involved in telling others how to make their homes more energy efficient at little or no cost, the staff decided they needed their own "hands on" experience.

Therefore, the group of six selected an older home and spent the necessary time to weatherstrip doors and windows, caulk leaks and make storm windows. Shivaun Tessier, who has now transferred to the Public Affairs Department in Baton Rouge from Consumer Services, planned and coordinated the project. Energy costs after a year will again be compared with the previous year's.

Ms. Tessier and Dennis Smith, another consumer services representative, spent time with the Pointe Coupee Parish Community Action Agency training operators for the Department of Energy's weatherization program. The two were "training people who reach a

At Low-Income Customers

lot of people, a multiplier effect," according to Jo Ann Smith of Beaumont, manager of consumer information.

Another consumer services representative who has also moved to Public Affairs, Pris Gallagher, contacted all the American Association of Retired

People chapters in the area and offered conservation programs for their meetings.

The presentations were so well received and successful that the AARP groups are calling for more, according to Miss Babin, who noted the retirees were also interested in billing information.

Shareholders Meet in Beaumont



Shareholder P. G. Simon listens intently during the May 14 annual shareholders meeting.



Zeb Alford, newly-named president of Gulf States' newest subsidiary — Prudential Drilling Company — mingles with the crowd following the annual meeting.



Board Chairman Don Crawford appears amused during the proceedings. He is flanked by (from left to right) company President Norman Lee, corporate Secretary Leslie D. Ogden and board member James E. Taussig II.



Jessica, Olaf Jr. and Cory



Olaf Lovett

Naturalized Citizen

Olaf Lovett treasures a photograph of his father standing in front of the Taj Mahal, the Republic of India's exquisite architectural wonder.

Although Lovett now makes his home in Conroe, practically in the shadow of nearby Houston's towering skyscrapers and massive Astrodome, he has no regrets about leaving his homeland for the United States 12 years ago.

Now 35, Lovett has been a naturalized citizen since 1975. He is a truckdriver for the Substation Department of GSU's Western Division.

"The opportunities are endless here," Lovett exclaims. He, his wife Eileen, a native of East Africa, and their three children — Olaf Jr., 10, Jessica, 9 and Cory, 4 — have immersed themselves in Conroe's community life since settling here in 1978, after spending nine years in Massachusetts. The family attends Sacred Heart Catholic Church and the youngsters are enrolled in the parochial school. Lovett belongs to a softball club.

According to Lovett, while in New England, he was a truckdriver who frequently traveled throughout the South and South-

west. "I decided Texas would be a better place to live because of the warm weather," he explains.

In recent months, Lovett has been invited to address area civic clubs about his native land. "I like to talk, but I was a little scared at first," Lovett confesses. Lovett says he tries to stay up-to-date on developments in India as a result of the speaking invitations.

This summer, Lovett's 64-year-old father and 55-year-old mother are expected to resettle in America, making their home with Olaf and his family. The son has not seen his parents since he left India.

While Lovett has missed his family, he indicates that he has not missed some aspects of Indian life. With a population of more than 500 million, the republic cannot offer its citizens many of the same privileges enjoyed by Americans.

In India, Lovett was educated at two Catholic schools. He later lived in East Africa, the home of Eileen, who had studied with Lovett at one of the schools. After spending almost two years there, Lovett learned that Eileen's parents had decided to go to America. He had no visa and had

to return to India.

Part of the problem with marrying Eileen, explains Lovett, was that "the class system still prevails" in India, and Eileen, whose parents were from India, was from a higher caste than Lovett's family. Nevertheless, Eileen later returned from the United States to marry Lovett. After their Feb. 20, 1969, wedding day, the newlyweds traveled to Massachusetts where the bride's parents were living. Lovett laughingly notes that his in-laws required the young couple to remarry in a church since they had originally wed in a civil ceremony.

Along with his swarthy appearance, Lovett, whose English surname came from British ancestors, retains other vestiges of his Indian inheritance.

His wife, who is a licensed beautician, works parttime. "It's the Indian influence, I think," he concedes, after revealing that he asked that his wife work no more than three days weekly while the children are small.

While living in India, Lovett spoke three Indian languages and seven dialects. Although he no longer speaks them as well as he once did, he says he speaks very fluent Swahili, his wife's native tongue.

Celebrities Visit Port Arthur

When thousands of people jam a small city to view visiting celebrities and dignitaries, timely communications between law enforcement, medical and other public safety agencies can be of crucial importance.

About 100 amateur radio operators, representing Golden Triangle area ham radio clubs, helped create just such a communications link during the Bum Phillips Celebrity Golf Tournament in Port Arthur recently. The late May event featured appearances by Phillips, comedian Bob Hope, astronaut Alan Shepard and dozens of other entertainers.

And Tom Clark, with GSU Consumer Services in Port Arthur, was the man who organized the volunteer effort for the second year in a row.

A member of the Chamber of Commerce Officials Committee for the annual benefit for the Bob Hope Vocational High School for the Severely Disabled, Clark has also been a licensed amateur radio operator since 1955.

By placing amateur radio operators equipped with portable

units at key locations, the hobbyist clubs were able to keep information flowing regarding the visiting celebrities and the spectators.

"Our job was to make sure we had an effective, integrated communications system," Clark explained. Ham radio operators even rode in cars with the celebrities, taking portable units that enabled them to stay in touch on the road.

Priorities established by the amateurs included promoting safety, expediting the progress of the weekend event, performing a community service and improving the state of the art of communications.

But most importantly, the amateur radio operators were able to sharpen skills needed during emergency situations. "We use events like this as practice so that we can mobilize all the people during a hurricane or some other natural disaster," asserted Clark. (During the golf tournament, ham radio operators were performing similar functions at a nearby Confederate Air Force Air Show.)

Clark's interest in shortwave radios began during the early 1950s when an older brother in the service gave him a receiver. Although Clark could not talk to anyone, he was able to listen to shortwave communications throughout the world.

Hooked by what he heard, Clark ordered a Morse code instruction book and a study guide on short-wave radio theory and law. Once he had taught himself the code and some basic theory, the youth hunted down a television technician who could administer the test for his first license. Twenty-six years ago, he was licensed as a novice amateur radio operator, becoming the first licensee in his hometown of Buna. Only after he was licensed to go on the air did Clark meet another amateur.

The longtime Gulf Stater said he has seen many improvements in the state of the art since then.

"My first radio had vacuum tubes and was heavy and bulky," he recalled. The solid state models available today have such features as automatic repeating machines with telephone patches that can access telephone lines.

But along with the fun of being an amateur radio operator has come a sense of responsibility.

"We're licensed by the Federal Communications Commission, just like radio and television stations, and we have a responsibility to serve our communities and assist during disasters," Clark explained.



Bob Hope reflects before answering a reporter's question.



Tom Clark greets Bum Phillips



Clark discusses the amateur radio network with Barnette Singleton.

ON THE MOVE

Washington, James Jr., Louisiana Station, to repairman-1st class, Plant Production.

Washington, Leo, Louisiana Station, to auxiliary operator, Plant Production.

Watlington, John N., Willow Glen Station, to planning coordinator, Plant Production.

Weir, Jack B., Port Arthur, to equipment operator, Plant Production.

Wensel, John M., Beaumont, to pilot, System Operations.

Wesley, James, Lake Charles, to substation mechanic-2nd class, Elec. T&D.

White, Darrell W., Beaumont, to operator's helper, Plant Production.

White, Tommy L., Jr., Louisiana Station, to turbine-water plant operator, Plant Production.

Whitfield, Larry W., Baton Rouge, to lineman-3rd class, Elec. T&D.

Williams, Anthony J., Baton Rouge, to apprentice, Elec. T&D.

Williams, Charles L., Willow Glen, to repairman-1st class, Plant Production.

Williamson, Beverly S., Beaumont, to meter reader, Division Accounting.

Wilson, Arthur, Louisiana Station, to mechanic helper, Plant Production.

Wolfe, Kenneth W., Baton Rouge, to relayman-1st class, Elec. T&D.

Zemanek, John H., Beaumont, to director-engineering, System Engineering.

Adams, Camilla P., Beaumont, to supervisor-system billing, Accounting Services.

Allbritton, Harold W., Orange, to apprentice-T&D Dept., Elec. T&D.

Angelle, Joseph E., Lafayette, to storekeeper, Elec. T&D.

Arnim, Susan S., Beaumont, to engineering assistant, Engineering Design.

Bankston, Almedia J., Louisiana Station, to turbine-water plant operator, Plant Production.

Barnaby, Frank T., Conroe, to meterman-2nd class, Elec. T&D.

Barnard, Rickey G., Port Arthur, to repairman-2nd class, Plant Production.

Bazile, Willard, Jr., Beaumont, to utility worker II, Office Services.

Bennefield, Charles D., Beaumont, to operator's helper, Plant Production.

Bergeron, Gregory C., Willow Glen, to repairman-1st class, Plant Production.

Botley, Gayle W., Beaumont, accountant, to Rates & Regulatory.

Boullion, Clinton D., Beaumont, to apprentice-T&D Dept., Elec. T&D.

Bourgeois, Kathy L., Orange, to engineering assistant, Elec. T&D.

Bourque, Raphael, Beaumont, to system operator, Power Supply.

Broussard, Sedonia W., Beaumont, to operator's helper, Plant Production.

Brown, Lydia D., Baton Rouge, to consumer information coordinator, Division Consumer Services.

Caldwell, Brian W., Beaumont, to supervisor-fixed asset accounting, Accounting Services.

Canfield, Gregory M., Baton Rouge, to relay foreman, T&D Relay.

Cannon, Ernest L., Lewis Creek Station, to mechanical maintenance foreman, Plant Production.

Ciesiel, Ronald W., formerly of Baton Rouge, to chief engineer-area planning, Beaumont System Engineering.

Clark, Alfred, Jr., Port Arthur, to mechanic helper, Plant Production.

Cole, Roy E., Beaumont, to turbine engineer, Plant Production.

Coleman, Elton R., Beaumont, to utility foreman, T&D Substation.

Connolly, Bruce J., Beaumont, to senior accountant, Accounting Services.

Dake, Charles L., Baton Rouge, to assistant general line foreman, T&D Line.

Dana, Robert H., Beaumont, to supervisor-income tax, Accounting Services.

Darbonne, David B., Willow Glen, to test technician-3rd class, Plant Production.

Davis, Lawrence S., formerly of Beaumont, to division engineer, Conroe T&D Engineering.

Doucet, Brad P., Conroe to electrician-3rd class, Plant Production.

Duhamel, Alfred V., Port Arthur, to lineman-4th class, Elec. T&D.

Elter, Terrell G., Lake Charles, to lineman-3rd class, Elec. T&D.

England, Lesley A., Beaumont, to lead licensing engineer, River Bend Nuclear Group.

Feagin, Bobby L., Navasota, to assistant general line foreman, T&D Line.

Francis, Earnest, Jr., Port Arthur, to substation mechanic-2nd class, Elec. T&D.

Frazier, William P., Beaumont, to engineering assistant, Engineering Design.

Frederick, Michael W., Port Arthur, to lineman-1st class, Elec. T&D.

Gallagher, Priscilla W., Baton Rouge, to communications representative, Public Affairs.

Gaus, Henry J. II, Beaumont, to operator's helper, Plant Production.

Gerke, Rayburn L., Navasota, to utility foreman, T&D Line.

Godfrey, Scott A., Willow Glen, to equipment operator, Plant Production.

Grant, Thomas L., Beaumont, to switchboard operator, Plant Production.

Graves, Robert L., Baton Rouge, to assistant inventory analyst, Materials Management.

Green, Eric R., formerly of Louisiana Station, to engineer, Baton Rouge T&D Engineering.

Guillot, Joseph R., Jr., Conroe, to repairman-2nd class, Plant Production.

Haarmeyer, Roy, Conroe, to utility foreman, T&D Meter.

Harrison, Diania C., Baton Rouge, to customer contact clerk, Division Accounting.

Haskins, Rhonda B., Vidor, to customer contact clerk, Division Accounting.

Hatcher, Robert K., Port Arthur, to repairman-2nd class, Plant Production.

Hebert, Duane A., Lake Charles, to apprentice, Elec. T&D.

Hegwood, Edward L., Beaumont, to supervisor-contact crews, T&D Line.

Hill, Harold C., Baton Rouge, to assistant general line foreman, T&D Line.

Hills, Oscar, Jr., Baton Rouge, to corrosion technician-2nd class, Gas Dept.

Hoyt, Sandra L., Beaumont, to general clerk, Materials Management.

Humphrey, Mark W., Huntsville, to lineman-4th class, Elec. T&D.

Inglehart, Kiefer D., Navasota, to lineman-1st class, Elec. T&D.

Jackson, Andre' L., Beaumont, to apprentice, Elec. T&D.

Jackson, Karl W., Beaumont, to supervisor-regulatory reporting, Accounting Services.

James, Henry, Jr., Conroe, to storeroom assistant, Elec. T&D.

Jennings, Leonard, Lake Charles, to lineman-3rd class, Elec. T&D.

Johnson, Shelia M., Beaumont, to supervisor-data control, Accounting Services.

Jones, Carl J., Lake Charles, to serviceman-4th class, Elec. T&D.

Jones, Johnnie J., Louisiana Station, to repairman-2nd class, Plant Production.

Jones, Walter W., Baton Rouge, right-of-way representative, transferred to System Engineering.

Joseph, John H. C., Beaumont, to switchboard operator, Plant Production.

Kelly, James D., Orange, to lineman-4th class, Elec. T&D.

Kelly, Thomas J., Orange, to utility foreman, T&D Line.

Kettl, Lonnie J., St. Francisville, to equipment operator, Plant Production.

Kimball, Toni G., formerly of Baton Rouge, to nuclear communications specialist, Public Affairs, River Bend Site.

Knoden, John T., Sabine Station, to storeroom foreman, Plant Production.

Kotz, Kay A., Beaumont, to senior engineering assistant, Administrative Services.

Kramer, Gary N., Beaumont, to director-accounting services-Nelson Coal Project, Accounting Services.

Lambert, Craig W., Beaumont River Bend Nuclear Group, to supervisor-CHOC Engineering Group.

LeBlanc, Keith A., Port Arthur, to lineman-2nd class, Elec. T&D.

Lewis, Milton T., III, Lake Charles, to serviceman-2nd class, Elec. T&D.

Little, Karen J., Beaumont, to engineering helper, Engineering Design.

Maloney, Mary P., Baton Rouge, to customer contact clerk, Division Accounting.

Marcell, Kenneth E. Jr., Willow Glen, to test technician-1st class, Plant Production.

Martin, Douglas E., Conroe, to utility foreman, T&D Substation.

Martin, James R., Orange, to apprentice, Elec. T&D.

Mauer, John F., Beaumont, to director-tax services, Accounting Services.

McDaniel, Melvin L., Nelson Coal, to control operator, Plant Production.

McHam, Jerry D., Conroe, to coordinator-Woodlands Project, T&D Engineering.

Miller, Randell L., Lake Charles, to serviceman-4th class, Elec. T&D.

Misuraca, Vincent J., Baton Rouge, to survey coordinator, System Engineering.

Nantz, Robert L., Beaumont, to apprentice, Elec. T&D.

Nelson, Baynard E. Jr., Baton Rouge, to meterman-2nd class, Elec. T&D.

Newman, Harold W., Conroe, to operating supervisor, T&D Operations.

Perkins, Johnny R., Beaumont, to garage mechanic-2nd class, Elec. T&D.

Perry, Jack K., Nelson Station, to repairman-1st class, Plant Production.

Peters, Virginia S., Beaumont, to section head, Accounting Services.

Pursley, Ronald K., Dayton, to apprentice, Elec. T&D.

Rainey, Patricia L., Louisiana Station, to operator's helper, Plant Production.

Richl, Herman, Beaumont, to garage mechanic-2nd class, Elec. T&D.

Saule, David J., Port Allen, to lineman-4th class, Elec. T&D.

Seymore, Peter C., Baton Rouge, to assistant general line foreman, T&D Line.

Shackelford, Cynthia A., Sabine Station, to test technician-2nd class, Plant Production.

Shaw, Darrell L., Conroe, to substation mechanic-3rd class, Elec. T&D.

Smith, Gerhard W., Conroe, to operating superintendent, T&D Operations.

Spears, Kenneth W., Willow Glen, to repairman-2nd class, Plant Production.

Spitznagle, Jean L., Beaumont, to coordinator-salary administration, Human Resources.

Stabler, Harlan C., Conroe, to meter foreman, T&D Meter.

Stone, Donald R., Baton Rouge, to meterman-2nd class, Gas Dept.

Storch, Donald D., Port Arthur, to substation mechanic-4th class, Elec. T&D.

Stout, Bobby R., Conroe, to utility foreman, T&D Line.

Tessier, Shivaun M., formerly of Baton Rouge, to nuclear communications specialist, Public Affairs, River Bend Site.

Todd, Kyle E., formerly of Beaumont, to division engineer, T&D Engineering, Baton Rouge.

Trahan, Beverly B., Baton Rouge, to industrial engineer, Division Consumer Services.

Tullier, Loyce T., Baton Rouge, to pipeman welder-3rd class, Gas Dept.

Van Ruler, Larry D., Beaumont, to senior accountant, Accounting Services.

Walker, Dolph M., Dayton, to meter reader, Division Accounting.

Warner, John H. Jr., Beaumont, to lineman-4th class, Elec. T&D.

Warrick, Lucienne M., Beaumont, to stenographer-senior, Real Estate.

Watts, Ricky E., Baton Rouge, to pipeman welder-2nd class, Gas Dept.

Wenzell, Lawrence E., Jr., Beaumont, to head fireman, Plant Production.

Wheeler, Daniel E., Beaumont, to systems analyst, Computer Applications.

White, Charles E., Beaumont, to supervisor-general accounting, Accounting Services.

RETIREE UPDATE

Due retires in Beaumont

Woodrow "Woody" Due, a 39-year GSU veteran will retire July 1.

When Due reported to work on March 31, 1942, he was assigned to walk along lines as a patrolman, on the alert for problems. Due recalls that he then worked as a dispatcher in downtown Beaumont before moving to his current position at the Beaumont Service Center.

Pictured with Due are his wife, son and daughter.



New retirees given for June, July

Among those scheduled to retire June 1 were Anna C. Raymond, a senior stenographer in Consumer Services in Lake Charles, and Mike J. Edwards, test technician-1st class at Louisiana Station.

Expecting to retire July 1 were Dorlene L. Abrahams of Lake Charles; Doris L. Campbell, Albert J. Reaux, Eleanor J. Triplett, Doris S. Varley and Emmett R. Vick, all of Beaumont; and Lester C. McCullar and J. D. Wilson, both of Vidor.

Also to retire were John C. DeRouselle of Lafayette; Clifford L. Fruge of Port Arthur; Lois K. Robertson of Port Neches Warren W. Anderson of Bridge City; and Scoffield C. Davis, Sylvester C. Fugler, Malcolm R. Holmes, Philip E. Levert and Wilson L. Milton, all of Baton Rouge.



Werner dies in Baton Rouge

Eldon A. Werner, former president of the company, died June 8 in Baton Rouge.

Werner, who was president from April 1966 through February 1970, retired March 1, 1970.

A native of Brockton, Mass., Werner began his utility career with the Brockton Edison Company. He also held managerial positions in sales with Ponce (Puerto Rico) Electric Company, Stone and Webster Service Corporation in Boston and El Paso Electric Company before joining GSU as merchandise sales manager at Baton Rouge in 1939.

Other positions he held with Gulf States included personnel manager, vice president-personnel, a member of the board of directors, vice president-Baton Rouge Division and executive vice president.

Survivors include his wife, Hilda; one son, John; and one grandchild.

Ollie Eggleston dies June 1

Ollie Eggleston of Houston, who retired from Gulf States February 1, 1959, died in a Spring Branch area hospital June 1.

According to *Plain Talks* Correspondent Bill Buckley, Eggleston was a longtime street-car operator. Later positions

included those of trouble clerk and substation operator, substation operator of a Class C Station and operator of a Class A Substation, the position he held upon retirement.

Eggleston began his long utility career with Eastern Texas Electric Company in 1918.

He was a native of Elgin, Texas.

Survivors include his wife, Ethel Mae Eggleston of Houston; one daughter, Doris K. Seljos of Houston; two sons, Ollie Jack Eggleston and George M. Eggleston, both of Houston; one sister, Alma Mayfield of Wichita Falls, Texas; seven grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.



Smith ends GSU career

Elmo C. Smith will end his long career with Gulf States on July 1, when he plans to start spending most of his time deep sea fishing.

Smith, a district serviceman in Vidor, first went to work for GSU in July 1941. Five months later, he went into the service with the U.S. Navy. Upon his return to Gulf States in October 1950, Smith first worked in Beaumont T&D, then transferred to the Woodville office in 1950. He moved to Vidor in 1955.

According to Smith, he and his brother built a boat that will carry them out on their deep sea fishing expeditions.



Pete Carney drops anchor from The Brendan.



Betty Carney accepts a conch shell from Pete, while Betty Hawkins, a Beaumont friend of the couple, looks on.

Carneys 'cruise' through retire **Home on**

Pete Carney spent his first year of retirement from Gulf States barefoot and unshaven.

But that suited Carney just fine, since he spent much of that year aboard his 37-foot sailboat, *The Brendan*, in the middle of a tropical paradise.

His wife Betty, who is every bit the sailing enthusiast that Carney is, explained that "cruisers" never wear shoes aboard anyone else's boat and that a lot of the fun of having a sailboat involves meeting fellow sailboat owners. Since their three-compartment cabin craft features a shower, kitchen and many of the other conveniences of a home, Carney grew his beard just for fun.

The couple began sailing in 1970, simply because "It was just something we always wanted to do," Carney recalled.

That love, combined with Betty's philosophy that "the fallacy that leads to an unsuccessful retirement is thinking that you have to wait 'til you get to retirement age to decide what you want to do," caused the Carneys to begin planning early

for a home on the water. Since the couple now leases their Beaumont home, Betty said, "For all practical purposes, the boat is our home."

A former chief pilot for Gulf States who was later promoted to transportation superintendent, Carney admitted that he has slowed down quite a bit since his flying days — "from 500 knots to five knots!" Carney began his career during the 1930s in an open cockpit aircraft, later was a wartime pilot and worked as a pilot for another company before joining Gulf States in 1957.

He revealed, however, that life on the open seas has its thrilling moments, too. "Things get a little hairy at times," he conceded, pointing out that they have been aboard their craft in 15- to 18-foot seas.

During a recent trip to the Golden Triangle to visit their three daughters and their families, the Carneys recounted their adventures of the past year.

In early 1980, the Carneys began looking for an appropriate craft to replace their fourth boat,

a 30-footer. (They had first owned a 17-foot "daysailer," then worked up to a 24-foot, 28-foot and the 30-foot cabin models.) They found the 37-foot Morgan in Florida and sailed it to the Port Arthur Yacht Club marina. "We gradually increased the size and our investment in sailboats. We just wanted to limit it to what she and I can handle alone and we feel very comfortable with the 37-footer," Carney said.

Although Carney officially retired last June 1, the couple waited until Oct. 3, 1980, to set sail on their longest trip ever. Before leaving Port Arthur, however, they stocked their boat with enough goods to last several months. They spent a leisurely six weeks getting to Miami, Fla., then left there around the second or third week of November for the Bahamas. Over the next six months, they visited all of the Bahama Islands.

The Brendan carries a dinghy with an outboard motor which serves as the couple's "car." According to Betty, "We never go into a marina — we just anchor



Betty Carney chats with Russ Hawkins, a Beaumonters who visited the couple in the Bahamas, while Pete talks to another acquaintance.



Betty Hawkins and Pete Carney rest beneath the shade of a palm tree.

ment

the Main

by Susan Gilley

our boat, then strike out in our dinghy."

The longest open-water passage the couple attempted was 35 hours long. For the most part, said Betty, "We don't move every day. We may get to an anchorage and beachcomb and dive for a while." Fishing is another favorite pastime, she added.

Although the couple's three daughters and many of their friends had expressed initial apprehension over the Carneys decision to spend their retirement afloat, Betty says they managed to dispel those doubts. "Now they're proud that we're doing something that we want to do." Each of the three young women, as well as one's husband, visited the pair while they were in the Bahamas.

While the couple never watches television or reads a newspaper when cruising, they manage to stay in touch with the rest of the world through a shortwave radio Carney installed on the sailboat. Every Tuesday, they would contact a Nederland ham radio operator, who served as their

link with the rest of their family.

They discovered that they learned about any earth-shattering news as soon as everybody else through their shortwave radio. "We heard about the shooting of both the Pope and President Reagan just minutes after they happened," Betty noted.

If there is any drawback to sailing, it is only that water must be conserved. "We use our water very carefully. We can carry 150 gallons," she said continuing, "but you don't want to carry too much."

Betty bakes bread in their two-burner alcohol stove. She also must plan carefully to have enough staples to tide them over for a long period of time. "There is a tremendous markup on items in the Bahamas. Instant coffee costs about \$10 for eight ounces and frozen chicken is priced at about \$2 per pound," the tall, tan woman itemized.

But life on *The Brendan* has been good for both of the Carneys.

Shortly after receiving a clean bill of health from his family physician, Carney insisted, "I have

no doubt that sailing has improved my health." Part of that may be because he stays "busy as a one-armed paper hanger," he suggested. While he managed to lose a few pounds, Betty admitted that she added a few — "eating all that homemade bread," she commented ruefully.

In mid-June, the Carneys embarked on another trip — this one more ambitious than the last. They planned to return to Florida, where they had left their boat, then sail up the East Coast, possibly as far as Cape Cod. They then planned a leisurely return back down the coast to the Chesapeake Bay area by autumn, then back to Florida and on to the Bahamas by November or December. This time, they may also visit Haiti, Santo Domingo and the Virgin Islands.

All those plans may not become reality, but that's okay with the Carneys. "Cruisers plan things, but they're not locked in to anything. You wake up every day to a new day," Betty exclaimed.

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Lake Charles Division



40 years Division Vice President Bill Richard with Mr. and Mrs. Rene DeBlanc.



30 years Front row, left to right: Ivy Becnel, Ferdinand McGee, Morris Standefer and Richard. Back row, left to right: Carol Foreman, Elbert Heard, Howard Mack, Jim Richardson and O. L. Romero.



20 years From left to right: Richard, Daniel Blanchard, Clifton Etienne, Fedrick Green, Joseph Gresko, Rosalie James and George McCarthy.



10 years Front row, left to right: Richard, Theda Allison, Bessie Esthay, Nancy Guillory, Ronald Minnich and Gary Cockrill. Back row, left to right: Lawrence Ardoin, Edward Brauner, Danny Coleman, Helen Kennedy, Charles Landrum and Anthony Malveaux.

Port Arthur Division



20 years Mr. and Mrs. Paul Narcisse.



30 years From left to right: Division Vice President J. Ted Meinscher and Andrew Williams.



10 years From left to right: Joe Domino, Ronnie Carlin, Penny M. Bolyard, Rodney Townsend and P. J. Walker.

Western Division



30 years From left to right: Division Vice President John Conley with Ernest Branch, Rolan Goodson, Henry James and Joe O'Neill.



20 years Front row, left to right: Conley, Leo Adams, Bill Hinze, Curtis Kurten, Clara Wellmann and Neil Teague. Back row, left to right: James McGrew, Louis Snadidge and Marvin Schaefer.



10 years Front row, left to right: Conley, Barbara Welch, Ernest Cannon, C. B. Jackson, D. W. Ratherford, Billie Watt and Douglas Martin. Back row, left to right: Norman Lofland, Buster DeBose and Bill Dietz.

Beaumont Division

40 years From left to right: President Norman R. Lee, Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Meaux, Mr. and Mrs. L. C. McCullar, Mr. and Mrs. S. F. Krebs and Division Vice President Arden Loughmiller.



20 years From left to right: Lee, W. G. "Bill" Hollins, Dale Hare, Conrad A. Kincaid, Gene Tillery, Jimmy D. Spurlock and Loughmiller.



30 years From left to right: Lee, Lee Mills, Billy Creel, Joe West, Norman Morrison, Michael Page, J. I. Pike, Fritz Duhon and Loughmiller.



10 years From left to right: Lee, Arnulfo Hernandez, Mike Freeman, James R. Williams, Philip W. Carter, Jean McClammy, William S. "Sandy" Edwards, Herman D. Leasure and Loughmiller.

INSIDE GSU



Hoyt honored upon transfer

Sandy Hoyt (left) cuts a going-away cake as Tressie Butcher (center) and Andrea Ronning look on.

Hoyt was recently transferred from purchasing to materials planning. She had been in purchasing for seven years.



Farewell party given for Ogea

Sharon Ogea was honored by Lake Charles Division accounting employees with a combination graduation and going-away party on Friday, May 29.

The young woman served as a Career Office Education employee while in high school. She received some add-a-beads and a gold music box. Shown with Miss Ogea is Rosalie James of division accounting.

Two women win bass tournament

A two-woman fishing team won first place in the Live Wires Bass Tournament at Six Mile Marina May 2.

Nancy Nesbitt of Materials Management in Beaumont and her partner, Velma Anderson, caught a total of 12 pounds and 15 ounces. In addition, Ms. Anderson (shown at right in the photo) caught the biggest bass — a four-pound, 13-ounce fish.



Other winners included:

- 2nd place, Tommy Griffiths of Neches Station and partner Bruce Fontenot
- 3rd place, Lonnie Leger of Beaumont and partner Leroy Kirkland
- 4th place, George Davis of Baton Rouge and partner Nola Davis
- 5th place, Walt Roberts of Vidor and Jimmie Smith of Neches Station
- 6th place, Gerald Mercer of Port Arthur and partner Randy Zampina



Couple announces birth of son

Mr. and Mrs. Walter Freeman of Baton Rouge have a new baby son, Nicholas Ray, who was born April 6.

The infant's father is in the relay department in Baton Rouge.

Little Nicholas weighed seven pounds and six ounces and measured 21 inches long at birth.



Couple celebrates 35th anniversary

Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Perkins Jr. of Beaumont celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary Friday, May 22 during a reception at the Red Carpet Inn.

Perkins is a meter reader who has been with Gulf States since Oct. 15, 1951. He and his wife, Rose, were married May 22, 1946.

Pictured with Mr. and Mrs. Perkins is the youngest of their five children, Maggie P. Bassett of Beaumont.

The couple's other children are Carolyn Charlton of Houston, and Brenda Oliphant, Peggy Lee and Wayne Perkins, all of Beaumont.

INSIDE GSU

Planning begins for conference

A panel of Texas science teachers and supervisors has begun planning for a Science Education Conference to be held in Beaumont next January under the joint sponsorship of Gulf States and the Thomas Alva Edison Foundation.

During an April 28 session of the steering committee, teachers discussed possible topics, including energy.



James G. Cook, president of the Thomas Alva Edison Foundation (shown in the picture), told the group that the foundation should be able to obtain as speakers almost any experts in the selected conference topic.

Gulf Staters involved in the steering committee meeting arrangements were Jo Ann Smith, manager-consumer information; Kathy Reed, Port Arthur Division consumer services representative; Connie Calfee, Western Division consumer services representative; and Carol Morris, Beaumont division senior consumer services representative.



Couple adopts baby girl

Lance and Carolyn Nowlin of Baton Rouge recently adopted a baby girl named Kristin Michelle. Nowlin, a substation mechanic, says the infant was born May 4.

According to *Plain Talks* Correspondent Adelaide Bankston, other vital statistics included the facts that she weighed nine pounds and four ounces and measured 21 inches long.

Her grandparents are Kathryn Nowlin and M. G. Porter.



Kasper becomes Eagle Scout

Sean Kasper, the son of Beaumont employee Ed Kasper, has received the Boy Scouts' highest honor by becoming a member of the Order of the Eagle.

A 1981 graduate of Thomas Jefferson High School, young Kasper is a member of Port Arthur's Troop 67, which is sponsored by St. Catherine's Catholic Church. He is the first member of the two-year-old troop to become an Eagle Scout.

According to his dad, who has been with Consumer Services since joining GSU two years ago, the youth will serve a three-year stint with the U.S. Army as a helicopter mechanic before continuing his education at Texas A&M University.

Kasper also has another son and two daughters.



Rodriguez given baby shower

Patti Rodriguez, Port Arthur T&D line clerk, was given a surprise baby shower on May 8, shortly before taking a maternity leave of absence.

She received several useful items, including a combination swing/bed, car seat, handmade blankets and crib sheets, reports Rose Reeves.

Mrs. Rodriguez was to return to work following the birth of her child.

INSIDE GSU



Terro scores hole-in-one

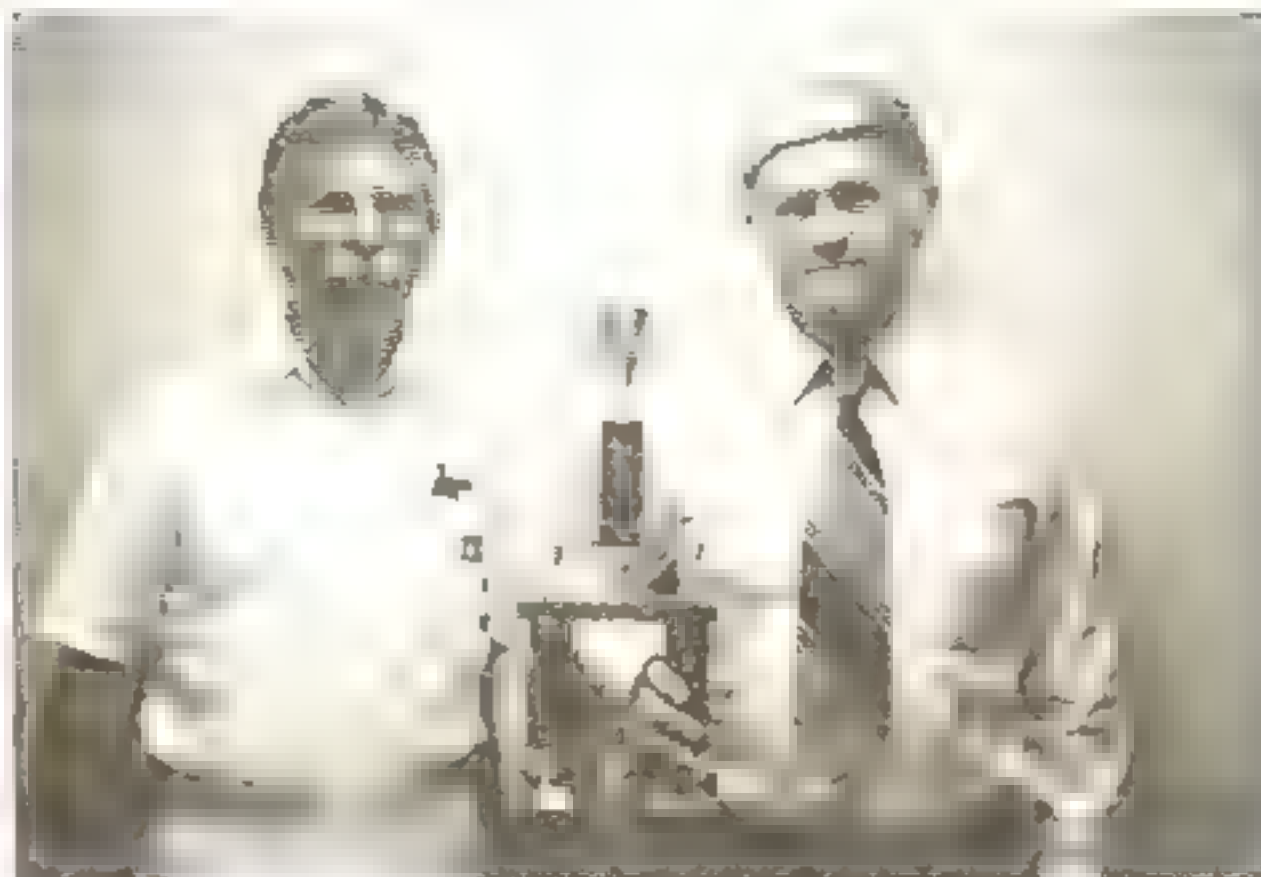
Lee Terro, Port Arthur substation foreman, recently scored a hole-in-one on Number 11 at Babe Zaharias Golf Course in Port Arthur.

Plain Talks Correspondent Rose Reeves reports that Terro's accomplishment took place at Par 3 at 170 yards. He was using a five iron.

Johnny Barlow, golf pro at Zaharias, has submitted Terro's name to *Golf Digest*, which may entitle him to a dozen golfballs or a commemorative patch.

GSU wins 1st at safety fair

A Gulf States' booth at a safety fair sponsored by Baptist Hospital of Southeast Texas won first place for its entry dealing with electrical hazards around homes.



Manning the booth were Mike Durham, Ray Thompson (pictured at the right) and Gene Russell (pictured at left), all of the system Safety Department.

The fair featured 30 booths and was visited by about 1,000 persons, including about 500 school-children.

Varley retires in Beaumont

Doris Varley, an administrative assistant in the Payroll Department, was honored at a recent going-away party as she began her retirement.

She had been employed by the company since 1945.

Shown with the new retiree as she admires a gift is her former supervisor, Lemelle Triplett (left).



Beaumonters host promotion party

A group of Beaumont employees recently hosted a going-away party for Larry Davis and Kyle Todd.

More than 75 persons attended the gathering at the Neches Station clubhouse on May 30.

Davis has been named division engineer for the Western Division based in Conroe and Todd has been named division engineer for the Baton Rouge Division.

Shown with the honored employees are (from left) L. P. Bourne, J. A. Wallace, Todd, Davis and John Zemanek.



SERVICE AWARDS

40
years



Frank L. Turner
Plant Production
Neches Station

30
years



Robert T. Collier
Engineering Design
Beaumont



Arthur J. Edwards
Plant Production
Neches Station



Joseph Fontana
Accounting Services
Beaumont



Billy G. Fountain
Electric T&D
Beaumont



Samuel Smith
Gas Department
Baton Rouge

20
years



Jules G. Benoit
Electric T&D
Lake Charles



Robert G. Wolfe
Engineering Design
Beaumont



Clyde H. Nugent
Electric T&D
Orange

10
years



John M. Powers
Electric T&D
Baton Rouge



Lloyd E. Ryman Jr.
Electric T&D
Beaumont



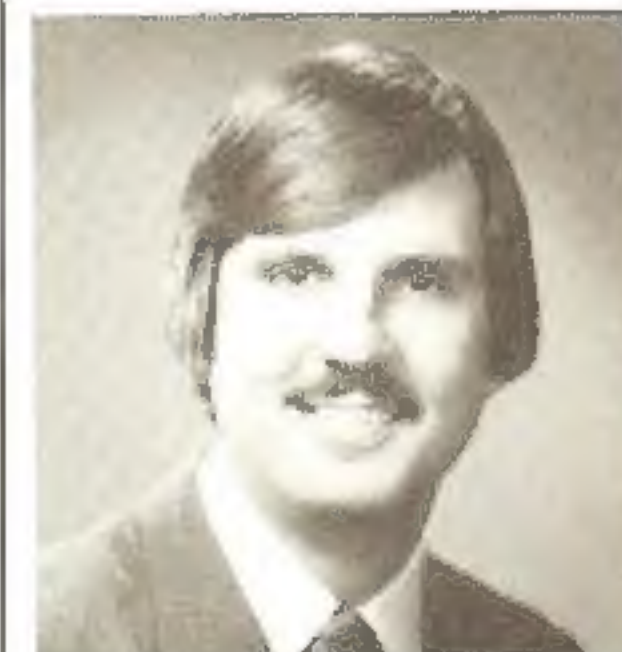
K. R. Sandberg Jr.
Plant Engineering
Beaumont



Ronald F. Tomes
Electric T&D
Baton Rouge



Paula D. Crowley
Accounting Services
Beaumont



John H. Zemanek
Engineering
Beaumont

AP&L to offer customer loans

Arkansas Power & Light will soon begin offering zero-interest loans to customers who want to conserve.

According to an article published in *Electrical Week*, the utility projects that within five years, 45,000 of its 153,000 eligible customers will have taken advantage of the program — resulting in a 15-megawatt reduction in peak demand.

The state Public Service Commission is deciding whether to require all Arkansas utilities to follow suit.

Rising energy costs reshape opinion

Demographic trends and rising energy prices are reshaping public opinion regarding the benefit of nuclear energy, a new study says.

The Planning Economics Group, a Boston, Mass., research group that studies economic and social behavior related to energy, says attitudes toward nuclear energy are growing more favorable as the population ages and becomes increasingly sensitive about energy prices. The conclusion, which appears in the group's Winter 1981 quarterly report, is based on interviews with a selected sample of 1,200 adults.

"In the recent past, attitudes toward nuclear energy have not been especially price-sensitive for key segments of the American population," the report says. "Concern about danger from radiation (including nuclear waste) has overridden cost considerations. The nuclear industry has found it difficult to overcome the combined effects of this price-insensitivity and the fear of the unknown, which is an inherent part of people's perceptions about nuclear energy," it says.

However, two factors are changing public opinion, the report says:

— "The American population as a whole is aging. Younger demographic segments who were least price-sensitive toward nuclear energy are becoming proportionally smaller in terms of their significance in the population as a whole. Americans who are strongly pro-nuclear tend to be older and to feel the brunt of higher energy costs on relatively fixed incomes."

— "Even among younger population segments, rising energy costs have introduced some price sensitivity toward nuclear energy, except for young householders with children under 6. The pro-nuclear group overlaps significantly with that group of Americans who have greatly reduced their driving over the past year. Apparently, these groups share an extreme concern over energy cost, resulting in a level of conservation of gasoline that imposes personal problems. Their price-sensitivity appears to result in a changed positive attitude toward the possibility of reducing energy costs through increased use of nuclear sources."

EPRI, utility test hot water power

Development of Nevada's geothermal resources has moved one step closer to reality with preparations to install a hot water power test unit by Sierra Pacific Power Company and the Electric Power Research Institute.

Also participating with Sierra Pacific in geothermal development are the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (California) and three Oregon power companies — Portland General Electric, Pacific Power and Light Company and the Eugene Water and Electric Board.

The interest from the Pacific Northwest stems from expectations that hot water reservoirs in northern Nevada may prove similar to those in Oregon, where this resource may also be tapped someday.

The Reno-based utility and EPRI are sharing costs in the \$108,000 project, which has a goal of measuring and controlling the extent of scale formation (mineral deposition) that occurs as geothermal hot water flows through a power plant. The test unit is a heat exchanger that takes heat from the geothermal fluid in order to produce high temperature and pressure in another fluid that will drive a power turbine. This two-fluid process is known as a "binary cycle."

The results of these tests are expected to help Sierra Pacific and the four other utilities define design criteria and operating parameters for a binary cycle power plant capable of producing 10 megawatts of electricity. This plant is planned for construction in northern Nevada within two years. The site will be selected during the coming year.

Times Voices Unexpected Sympathy

The New York Times has the reputation of being a vocal voice of liberalism and certainly has had more than its share of verbal battles with major industries and corporations. Recently, however, the *Times* raised eyebrows in some quarters with an editorial which sympathized with the financial plight of the electric utility industry.

The editorial, reprinted below, was entitled, "The Cost of Not Raising Utility Bills":

"It happened here, but it could just as easily have been Ohio or Alabama. A year ago Con Edison asked for a whopping 15 percent rate increase. Only now, in the face of consumer protests, has it finally been approved. The pattern is widespread. All over the country, utilities are struggling for rate relief. They often win. But typically, relief is long delayed and insufficient to pay the real cost of service.

"That pleases many consumers, who with occasional accuracy cast utilities as arrogant, badly managed monopolies. But the joke is ultimately on the public. For the resulting financial crisis in the industry is paralyzing efforts to reduce oil imports and raising the long-term cost of electricity production.

"Consumers might be excused a certain cynicism about the utility industry's pleas for cash. Asking for more than you need or expect, after all, is part of the game of extracting rate raises from state regulators. But by the most objective measure possible, the perceptions of potential investors, the industry is not shedding crocodile tears.

"Take the example of Commonwealth Edison, the huge utility serving the Chicago area. The company's books and the state of Illinois say a share of its stock is worth about \$27. But it trades on the New York Stock Exchange for about \$19, presumably because investors are skeptical of the state's willingness to allow an adequate rate of profit. As a result, Commonwealth Edison cannot raise capital by selling additional shares without reducing the return to existing shareholders.

"This doesn't bother many industry critics. They note, correctly, that utilities have always wanted new plants, whether they were needed or not. Furthermore, the demand for electricity is stable, or perhaps even slipping. So, they argue, an incentive not to build is a good thing.

"Maybe not. No one is sure that demand is close to peaking. If, for example, electric cars become practical in the next few years, the picture could change dramatically. But even if one assumes that new capacity will not be needed to meet demand, there is still cause for alarm.

"First, tight-fisted regulators are costing consumers money even as they try to save it. Utilities must borrow over \$100 billion in the next few years simply to meet existing obligations. But because of lenders' doubts about the industry's financial stability, the interest on those funds is a point or two above the borrowing costs of blue-chip debtors like Exxon.

"More important, the inability to raise capital has crimped utility plans to switch from oil to coal. The national security virtue of such conversions is unassailable: half of all oil imports is now used by utilities. Besides, conversion would save money. According to Harvard researcher, Peter Navarro, two-thirds of regularly used oil-fired generators could be replaced by more economical coal or nuclear power or investments in energy conservation.

"One solution to the industry's financial distress would be to preempt state control of utilities, or at least to allow appeals on rate decisions to a more sympathetic Federal agency. However, given Ronald Reagan's pledge to return power to the states, such a reform is almost inconceivable. That puts the burden on state regulators who profess to defend the consumers' rights. We hope some will see the light."

PLAIN TALKS

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Q. Is industrial pollution shortening human lives?

A.

Despite all the claims that we are poisoning ourselves by polluting our air and water with chemical, nuclear and other industrial wastes, the fact remains that over the 40-year period 1940-79, average life expectancy in the United States increased by 10 years. It has gone from 64 to 74.

